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STATE EUR/ERA FOR SHAWN GRAY, EEB/TPP/ABT/BTT FOR JACK BOBO
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SUBJECT: CZECHS SHOW MIXED REACTION TO EU'S LACKLUSTER
PROGRESS ON BIOTECH

REF: STATE 153542

¶1. Post delivered reftel demarche to Ministry of Environment Genetically-Modified Organism (GMO) Department Director Zuzana Doubkova November 13. Doubkova said official Czech positions on recent biotech developments in the EU have not been determined. Unofficially, she said the Ministry of Environment's positions are mixed, and the Ministry will vote on these positions November 19. Doubkova noted that the positions will be discussed with other ministries before becoming the official position of the Czech Republic, but she provided no definite timeframe when this would happen.

¶2. Unofficially, Doubkova provided the following working-level positions of the Ministry of Environment, which is the responsible ministry for GMO:

-- The Czech Republic generally supports the WTO ruling with a few exceptions. Specifically, it supports the national right of moratoriums on plantings (such as the case of Hungary). For voting purposes, the Czechs will vote in support of plantings but will abstain on votes for import and processing of GMO.

-- The Czechs will support EU Environment Commissioner Dimas' recommendation not to approve Bt11 and 1507 until a study ordered by the EC on these varieties is published. The publication of the study is currently scheduled for spring ¶2008.

-- The Minister of Environment and Minister of Agriculture have different opinions on whether suspension of commercial planting of pesticide biotech products violates EU rules. Doubkova could not offer an opinion on which way the Czechs will go in this case.

-- The Czechs will not support Italy's proposal for a moratorium on authorizations of biotech products.

¶3. Post will provide updates as the Czech government develops its official position on these biotech issues.
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